THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • APRIL 14, 2022 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

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COWIN COPYCATS FOR OTHER VAX, BLOOD BANK REGISTRY

The Centre plans to clone the Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network (CoWIN) for other immunisation programmes

TWO PLATFORMS ARE IN THE WORKS

Two platforms on the lines of CoWIN are in the works, said National Health Authority Chief Executive Officer R S Sharma. "We won't touch CoWIN, but we will make a clone on the same principles. We will be creating two other platforms — one for blood banks and another for the universal immunisation programme," he said in an interview to Express

NEW SYSTEMS TO BE LAUNCHED THIS YEAR

- "Work has already started. It will take a couple of months for us to create it. We will be launching it by this year," said Sharma, the main architect of the indigenous CoWIN app
- CoWIN is a cloud-based IT solution for planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating Covid-19 vaccination in India

1,07,83,66,300

TOTAL BENEFICIARIES REGISTERED ON THE COWIN PLATFORM AS OF WEDNESDAY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

WILL MODI MAKE PEACE OVERTURES DURING J&K VISIT?

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

WITH Prime Minister Narendra Modi scheduled to visit J&K on April 24 — his first after Article 370 was hollowed out in August 2019 — there is quiet anticipation of bilateral peace overtures from him in the wake of the change of guard in Pakistan.

Modi had conveyed India's desire for peace and stability in the region free of terror in his felicitation tweet to new Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Shehbaz, while thanking Modi, said: "Pakistan desires peaceful & cooperative ties with India. Peaceful settlement of outstanding disputes including Jammu & Kashmir is indispensable."

Bilateral relations when Shehbaz's predecessor Imran Khan was in the saddle had bottomed as he had burnt his bridges by being a hawk and making personal remarks against Modi. In contrast, Shehbaz is a seasoned politician. Also, the Pakistan Army is inclined towards resumption of dialogue with India.

The exchange of messages between Modi and Shehbaz has sent positive vibes in J&K. Jammu-based political commentator Rekha Choudhary said Modi may send some positive signals to Pakistan during his address at a public rally in Samba, close to the International Border in J&K. "He may talk of peace between the two neighbouring countries and Pakistan taking up responsibility that its soil is not used for terror. But there will be no accusations," she said.

New projects

Apart from interacting with panchayat members, the prime minister is likely to launch multiple industrial investment and development projects in J&K during his visit

For over a year, Indian and Pakistani troops have strictly adhered to the November 2003 border ceasefire pact. The Line of Control and International Border in J&K have been calm since February 25 last year.

Modi would be visiting the Palli panchayat in Samba district of Jammu to mark the National Panchayati Raj Diwas celebrations. From there, he will address representatives of around 700 panchayats across the country virtually. About 30,000 representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions of J&K are expected to attend the event. The PM's public rally would be his third so far in Samba. Thousands of people from different parts of Jammu region are expected to attend the rally.

At an all-party meeting of J&K leaders last year, Modi had famously said he wanted to remove the *Dilli ki doori* (distance from Delhi) and *dil ki doori* (distance from the heart).

HITTING BACK

Rights abuse in US too: Jaishankar

IN a strong push back to US pressure tactics, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday that India is equally concerned about the human rights abuse in the US. "We also take our views on other people's human rights situation, including that of the United States. So, we take up a human rights issues when they arise in this country, especially when they pertain to our community," Jaishankar said in Washington.

On Monday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken had said the US was monitoring a rise in human rights abuses in India.

"People are entitled to have views about us. But we are also equally entitled to have views about their views and about the interests, and lobbies which drive that," he said. *ENS*

EXPRESS READ

Will pledge sites if needed: BDA to SC

Bengaluru: The BDA has filed an affidavit before the apex court that it would pledge its corner sites with any bank to mobilise funds for the upcoming Dr K Shivaram Karanth Layout. **P2**

Ukraine war to lower India's GDP by 1.3%

Washington: Russia's war in Ukraine is likely to result in 1.3% lower GDP growth for India, said Hans Timmer, World Bank Chief Economist for the South Asia Region.

FIR filed against KSE in contractor suicide case

Case of abetment to suicide against minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Udupi

Congress leaders Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar, along with MLAs and MLCs, submit a memorandum to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Wednesday

BASED on a complaint filed by a family member of contractor Santosh Patil, who allegedly died by suicide at a hotel in Udupi, the police here registered a First Information Report (FIR) against Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister KS Eshwarappa and his associates for abetment to suicide on Wednesday.

Patil's family members reached Udupi late on Tuesday night and said that they will not move the body from the hotel till Eshwarappa and his associates were arrested. Later, they agreed and police teams arrived to conduct the inquest and other formalities. The Forensic Sciences Laboratory staff entered the hotel room around 8.30 am and collected fingerprints and other evidence till 3 pm. A foul smell had started emanating from the body as it had been lying there for two nights since Patil committed suicide, police sources said.

The postmortem was conducted at the Kasturba Medical College, Manipal around 8.30 pm on Wednesday. Initially, Santosh Patil's brother Girish had said that he did not want to take the body till the arrests were made. However by 8.45 pm, the body was taken to Belagavi after police officials convinced the family members that a thorough probe will be held and justice done to the family.

Pledged jewellery to raise money: Contractor's wife

Belagavi: Jayashree Patil, wife of Belagavi-based civil contractor Santosh Patil, who committed suicide in Udupi on Tuesday, said she pledged her two gold chains and four gold bangles to raise some money to help her husband.

Family members said that Santosh had completed road works worth Rs 4 crore ahead of a festival at the local Sri Laxmidevi Temple at Hindalga village in Belagavi district. They alleged that Eshwarappa and his associates were demanding 40 per cent commission to get the bills cleared which led to his suicide.

Basavaraj and Ramesh are among Eshwarappa's associates named in the FIR, which has been filed under Section 306 read with 34 of IPC (abetment of suicide), the police said. **MORE REPORTS: P4**

CONTRACTORS TO GO ON ONE-MONTH STRIKE

Works, mostly pertaining to public works department, health and irrigation sectors across Karnataka — executed by over one lakh registered contractors, are likely to be affected as contractors on Wednesday announced that they will go on a month-long strike anytime before April-end. They said that bills to the tune of ₹25,000 crore are pending before various departments of the government. If they go on strike, around 20,000 ongoing works totally worth ₹1 lakh crore will be affected, they warned. Karnataka State Contractors Association president D Kempanna said that a rally will be held in Bengaluru on May 25 to press their demands with the state government. **P4**

New policy to monetise non-minable land

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN a move aimed at increasing investment and creating jobs in the coal sector, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared a policy to monetise land parcels acquired under the Coal Bearing Areas (CBA) Act, which are mined out or are practically unsuitable for coal mining. Such land units will now be used for development of infrastructure relating to coal and energy.

The CBA Act provides for acquisition of coal-bearing lands and their vesting in government companies, free from any encumbrance. The new policy provides for utilisation of idle land owned by state-owned coal firms such as Coal India and its subsidiaries. The policy allows only leasing of the land for specified purposes. Coal firms can deploy private capital in joint projects for coal and energy-related infrastructure development activities.

The lands can be used to set up coal washeries, conveyor systems, coal handling plants, railway sidings, thermal and renewable power projects etc. The lands can also be used for rehabilitation and resettlement of project affected families, compensatory afforestation, and coal gasification.

Idle lands are prone to encroachment and entail avoidable expenditure on security and maintenance. The government hopes establishing infrastructure, without transferring ownership from state-owned companies, will help generate direct and indirect employment.

Investment in backward areas, local industry push

The policy is expected to unlock land infrastructure development that would encourage investment in backward areas. It would also prevent fresh acquisition of land and related displacement and promote local industries

Unlocking non-minable land will also help Coal India reduce its cost of operations as it will be able to set up coal-related infrastructure and solar plants on its own land in partnership with the private sector, a government release said. The new policy will also make coal gasification projects viable as coal needs not be transported to distant places, it added.

LANKAN SPRING

PROTESTORS REJECT MAHINDA'S TALKS OFFER

DILRUKSHI HANDUNNETTI @ Colombo

COLOMBO'S beleaguered Rajapaksa administration has responded to snowballing protests calling for the collective resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the government, by offering to discuss demands with the protestors.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Tuesday expressed his willingness to hold discussions with the protestors who were camping out at Colombo's iconic Galle Face Green for the fifth day in succession demanding an urgent system change. Protestors who are largely independent and without leadership structures have responded in the negative.

"There is no possibility of discussions, and this is the general position of protestors. Before any discussions take place, the president must resign, together with his cabinet. We are calling for a system overhaul and in that, the Rajapaksa family and this government has no place," said Thisath Weerakkody (29), a techie who is among the ever increasing protestors.

The Colombo administration's already fragile reputation took a nosedive with Tuesday's announcement of urgent debt restructuring which begins with the immediate suspension of repayment of external debts. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka has announced that repayment of loans will be halted in order to ensure essential supplies to the public while debt restructuring will go through with expert assistance. The government is expected to hold urgent discussion with the IMF next week.

$2 bn more Indian aid?

India is looking at offering $2 bn more as aid to Sri Lanka to regain the turf it lost to China in the past, according to Reuters. India has so far committed $1.9 bn in loans, credit lines and currency swaps. China has given a $1.3 bn syndicated loan and a $1.5 bn-yuan denominated swap

Sri Lanka has historically maintained a solid track record in external debt servicing. However, given the fragile status of the island's economy, the government has decided to go for a 'soft default' in the short term until restructuring of existing loans is completed as a priority with a view to avoiding a 'hard default'.

"Sri Lanka has lost its ability to repay foreign debt. It has come to a point that debt repayments are both challenging and impossible," Dr Nandalal Weerasinghe, the recently appointed Central Bank chief told reporters. This position has already been conveyed to the creditors and will not apply to any new facilities. Sri Lanka has around $ 6 billion of external debt servicing for the next three quarters. **CONTINUED ON: P12**

TAKE YOUR SHOT

April 12 13,28,685 doses
April 13 12,84,749 doses
TOTAL DOSES: 1,80,21,10,927

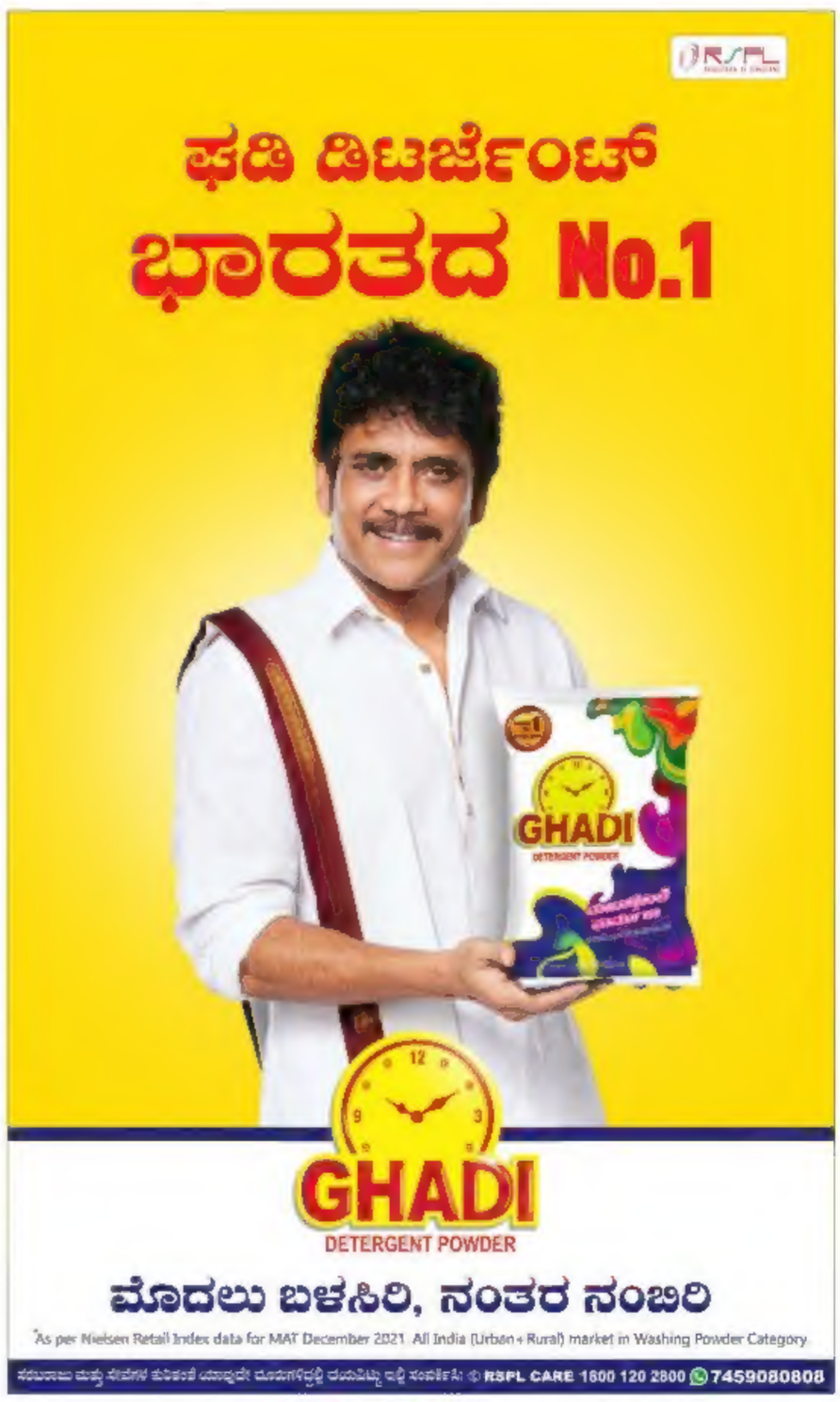
	KARNATAKA	APR 12	APR 13
	Fresh cases	796	1,086
	Recoveries	946	1,081
	Deaths	19	26

	KARNATAKA	APR 12	APR 13
	Fresh cases	46	55
	Recoveries	29	86
	Deaths	0	0

INFOSYS

NET PROFIT UP 12%

The company on Wednesday posted consolidated net profit of ₹5,686 crore for March quarter 2021-22 as compared to ₹5,076 crore in the corresponding period previous year | **P13**


RSPL
ಫಸ್ಟ್ ಚಾಯ್ಸ್ ಭಾರತದ No.1
GHADI
DETERGENT POWDER
ಮೊದಲು ಬಳಸಿರಿ, ನಂತರ ನಂಬಿರಿ
*As per Nielsen Retail Index data for MAT December 2021 All India (Urban+Rural) market in Washing Powder Category
RSPL CARE 1800 120 2800 7459080808

HAPPY TIMES

Good news! Normal monsoon for 4th year on the trot

Sudden showers in Bengaluru on Wednesday brought down temperatures and turned the weather pleasant | NAGARAJA GADERAL

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

HERE'S good news for farmers: There will be plentiful rain this year too. Karnataka is likely to get normal rainfall for the fourth consecutive year, private met agency Skymet has predicted. But experts pointed out that they will have to wait and watch the uniform rainfall pattern across the state. This year, Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted more rain during the summer.

Former director of Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) and consultant Srinivasa Reddy told TNIE that usually, after two years of normal rainfall, there is a tendency for a deficit monsoon, or the other way around. But in Karnataka, since 2019, the state has had normal rainfall, sometimes above normal too. However, he said the IMD is expected to release its forecast in a week, and a clearer picture of the monsoon will emerge.

Since 2000 till 2018 or 2019, Karnataka has been under drought for 15 of the 18 years. But things have changed, and some parts of the state even experienced floods.

Prof MB Rajegowda, agrometeorologist and former Registrar, University of Agriculture Sciences (UAS), explained that in Karnataka, normal rainfall during the South-West Monsoon is in the range of 850-870mm. For the past couple of years, the state has seen normal or above normal rainfall. **CONTINUED ON: P2**